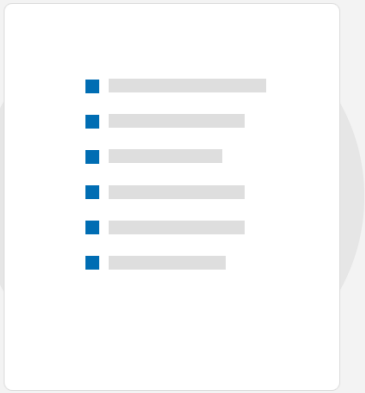
First time political candidate checklist – BEFORE announcing

Ozean Consulting has worked with a number of first time political candidates. They all have a lot in common – the biggest thing is “No first time candidate is as ready as they think they are.” The only exception to this is first time candidates that have been intimately involved in campaigns, and even then there is a learning curve, especially on the fund-raising side.



Decided if you really want to run for office:

- [ ] 1) Talk to your Family. We mean REALLY talk. A couple of reasons - I- Campaigns are stressful on the family., II- You are away. You will be gone – fundraising, walking neighborhood, events., III- You can be attacked and your secrets will come out. You need to make sure there is nothing you want to tell your spouse before you announce., IV- Have school age children? Your campaign will become a conversation piece for kids and their parents.

- [ ] 2) Think about your employment situation -even if you are the boss/owner/ceo – A couple of reasons - I- Campaigns are stressful on the work environment., II- You are away. Your lunches will be expanded in time so that you can travel across town to attend the X luncheon. You may come in late so that you can attend the X breakfast. You may leave early so that you can attend X meeting., III- Who will pick up your slack and more importantly will they resent it?, IV- If you win, and you have to attend day long meetings or if you goto Tallahassee and have to be gone for weeks or months – how will you get your “real” job done?, V- The minute you announce you are a Republican that wants to end X program, and your best assistant OR YOUR BOSS has an Uncle dependent upon X program, you are going to hear about it., VI- If you are not the boss, ask for permission. I am amazed on how many people don’t tell their employer they are thinking about running. You need to have a plan that addresses the points above, but you must have the discussion.

- [ ] 3) Answer this question, if I win, then what? - I- What will my family life be like? If I have meetings every Wednesday and Junior has baseball games every Wednesday, am I willing to sacrifice? If I am gone for two months to Tallahassee and it takes me 5 hours to travel, will my family join me for session in Tallahassee? etc. etc., II- What will my job be like? Is there a different role I may need to explore with the company? Who in the organization can pick up my duties at least partially? If I own the company, do I have the support staff needed? Can I find them?, III- Can I afford it? really! What is the opportunity cost to you getting elected? Will your billable hours be reduced to be replaced by a $30,000 annual salary? Are you ok with that?

Decided if you can win:

- [ ] 1) Fundraising - I- No first time candidate, unless they have done it, can fully appreciate the time, effort, and difficulty in raising money., II- Do you have 100 -150 friends that will give you X donation? Is that enough to win?, III- More importantly, ARE YOU WILLING TO ASK 100-150 friends to give you X donation? Is that enough to win? (I have witnesses many self assured candidates fall to pieces asking for money.), IV- Most candidates will need to spend 70-80% of their time raising money. No one else can take on this role for candidates, they have been and will remain the Chief Fund Raiser in Charge., V- Before you announce take out a sheet of paper, write a name, a phone number, and how much you are going to ask them for. (yes, the phone number is important – if you don't have it handy, you may not be as close as you think you are). Total it up. Take a list of previous contributors to like candidates? Know them? write it down. etc. [side-note: When I ask first time candidates to make this list, we total it up, cut it by 50%, then cut it again by 25% – and that is the initial internal working budget], VI- Is the timing right? When do I need the money in the bank? Need to raise $150,00 and you have two weeks until qualifying? You may want to reconsider.

- [ ] 2) District - I- Do I meet any residency requirements? Some districts have residency requirements, some you must live in for a period of time to be eligible to run., II- Do I meet any other requirements? Age, etc., III- If no residency requirement before the election to office, are there after? Do I need to move? If so, what is the plan?, IV- What is the past performance of the district? Voter Registration is a starting point, but you really want the PERFORMANCE for your district. Get as many data points as you can get your hands on. If you are a Republican, and the district you wish to run for performs 63% Democratic, you may want to reconsider. The dirty little secret? You may be the most incredible potential politician to walk the face of the Earth – but if you are in the wrong district, you may stand a significant chance of not winning.

- [ ] 3) Political Environment - I- What else will be going on during your potential ballot? Are you running during a presidential election, a gubernatorial election, or a stand alone election? How will other races affect your ballot? Are there any amendments or proposals on the ballot that may affect turnout?, II- What is the mood of the electorate? Don't know? Talk to people- fast. Don't know? Poll.

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